

September 21, 1991

The Case for Independent Initiatives
by Central Authorities or Individual Republics of the Former USSR
Toward a Denuclearized and Demilitarized World

As the republics of the former USSR restructure themselves and their relations, it would serve a number of urgent purposes [below] for these republics to lead the way, by concrete initiatives, in a worldwide campaign toward a drastically denuclearized and demilitarized world.

Such a campaign, launched by these initiatives--specified below--and calling for reciprocal action by the US and others, would aim at completing or achieving very substantial progress by the end of the century toward:

- the global abolition of tactical nuclear weapons
- the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons to minimal deterrent levels (and ultimately the abolition of nuclear weapons)
- the global elimination of MIRVd land-based missiles
- the delegitimization and renunciation of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any other role than the deterrence of nuclear attack, backed up by the concrete steps above and by
- parallel declarations by nuclear states that they will under no circumstances make first-use of nuclear weapons or use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.
- Comparable steps for other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological.
- the delegitimation and elimination of covert action,
- the radical reduction--by 75-90%--of global military budgets
- the near-elimination of international traffic in arms: in particular, in offensive weapons including tanks, long-range aircraft and missiles
- the conversion of military-industrial complexes, redirecting these resources--i.e., most of what currently amounts to almost \$1 trillion a year worldwide--to the peaceful purposes of humanity and to sustaining global ecology.

A summary of possible initiatives to these ends follows; a somewhat more detailed description of them is attached below.

A Selection of Possible Initiatives by Central Authorities or by Individual Republics Controlling Nuclear Weapons

NUCLEAR INITIATIVES

--Suspend permanently--or for a prolonged moratorium--nuclear testing throughout the former USSR, and specifically within the Russian Republic at the remaining operational test site, Novaya Zemlya.

--Renounce first use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

--Remove and dismantle all nuclear weapons from naval surface ships, calling for worldwide elimination of such deployment.

--Establish a schedule and carry out the first stages of the dismantling and destruction of all tactical nuclear weapons--including air-launched weapons--based on the territory of the former USSR, calling for reciprocation by other nuclear powers and negotiations leading to the worldwide elimination of such weapons: a global "zero option" for tactical nuclear weapons.

--Declare the goal of limiting remaining strategic nuclear weapons worldwide to the single function of detering nuclear attack, reducing them to the minimal numbers of secure weapons needed for that function. Reject--as a rationale for maintaining forces beyond those needed to deter nuclear attack--"war-fighting" or "damage-limiting" aims that project a first-strike threat, and dismantle weapons needed only for such discarded aims.

--Thus, dismantle and destroy all SS-18 ICBMs, calling for reciprocal action and negotiations leading to the worldwide elimination of MIRVd land-based missiles.

--Initiate reductions in strategic forces immediately--i.e., faster than is called for under START-I--calling for the bilateral reduction of the strategic forces of the US and former USSR to under 1000 warheads, by reciprocal actions and further negotiations.

--For example, a sizeable fraction of the strategic weapons in Kazakhstan and the Ukraine--if they do inherit control--could be dismantled immediately by independent initiative of those republics if they adopt this goal.

--This goal assumes continuance and strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty, which the republics should demand.

--Acknowledge and promulgate recognition of an urgent international interest in the rigor and reliability of control, storage and operational handling of all existing nuclear weapons--including those in process of dismantlement and destruction--and of all fissionable material.

--Thus, call for, encourage and support international understanding, inspection and monitoring of existing and improved measures of control, inventory management, secure storage and operational and logistical practices relating to all nuclear weapons and fissionable materials on the territory of the former USSR and all processes of dismantling and destruction therein.

--Call for all existing weapons worldwide to be tagged and registered, all those deployed to be fitted with "permissive action links" and those non-deployed to be in secure monitored storage, with states of the former USSR setting the example for all nuclear states.

NON-NUCLEAR INITIATIVES

--Declare the goal of a radical reduction worldwide in the production, deployment, and transfer by sale or otherwise primarily offensive conventional weapons including tanks, long-range military aircraft and missiles: thus, the radical reduction of international commerce in primarily offensive armaments.

--Russia and the rest of the republics of the former USSR would eliminate--or radically reduce--the production and sale or transfer abroad of such weapons, while radically reducing their internal deployment.

--Aim at the worldwide delegitimation and elimination of covert action ("plausibly deniable" clandestine political intervention, including support for paramilitary forces, coups, assassinations and terrorism), setting an example by eliminating the institutional capabilities of the KGB for covert action.,

--Open the files of the KGB on past covert action by the USSR and other nations: i.e., publish "the KGB Papers."

Why Independent Initiatives by the Republics?

Such initiatives by central authorities or the individual republics of the former USSR would serve a number of purposes:

- to improve their own security;
- to reassure the world about their nuclear weapons;
- to encourage reciprocal action by other nuclear states;
- to free resources from their own military budgets;
- to discourage nuclear proliferation;
- to enhance the feasibility of substantial external aid;
- and to help bring about a safer, more peaceful world.

It is also true that all of the goals above--and concrete initiatives like those described--could and should be declared and implemented independently by the United States, regardless of the action of others. Likewise, these goals and specific steps should be the object of bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Why, then, are independent initiatives by Russia and the other republics essential? Because otherwise, nothing is likely to happen, for a long time. And a rare historical moment--when old myths are being discarded in one part of the world and a new start is being made--will have been missed, perhaps irretrievably.

For a generation during the Brezhnev era, the misguided pursuit of "parity" led the Soviet Union deeply astray, as it reproduced American errors in nuclear policy. That could happen again. The changes suggested below simply correct some of those earlier errors. They are, in fact, wise, prudent--and overdue--whether or not the US follows suit immediately.

The massive external aid, investment and credits the republics of the former USSR will need for a prolonged period--to restore the environment and to support the conversion of their economies toward a market system and non-military production--can be forthcoming only with world demilitarization, freeing resources from the current military budgets of the industrial countries.

Likewise, the security these republics seek can be found only in the absence of conventional arms races or tactical nuclear weapons within the territory of the former USSR or its neighbors and surrounding waters.

Such conditions require changed attitudes about the role of offensive threats--conventional and nuclear--in existing nuclear states: which now include, de facto, a number of the republics of the former USSR. If the leadership necessary to stimulate this change in global consciousness does not come from these very republics, it is not likely to come, in time, at all.

The sad truth is that American officials and those of some other nuclear states are still in the grip of an "old way of thinking" on these matters no less delusional and inertial than the ideological framework from which the former Soviet republics are now so dramatically awakening.

The impact of initiatives such as those suggested above--in the first instance, on the consciousness of the global public--offers by far the best chance that these officials will eventually see the light: or feel the heat, of domestic political pressure.

This is not to discount the importance of further negotiations, bilateral and multilateral, but to recognize that progress in such negotiations depends on challenging and discarding illusions held on both sides over the past generation. Someone must be first to make this challenge, accompanied by concrete actions, and it is clearly not going to be the present US administration.

To change course like this--in advance of the other superpower, abandoning the psychological safety of insisting on "parity" in reductions--has obvious political dangers. It may even expose those advocating or deciding upon such change to the false charge of weakening their country's security: in effect, treason.

Even to contemplate facing such a charge takes strong nerves, and a deep sense of patriotism and purpose. To refute it requires exposing the fallacies of the old official thinking it reflects, and to admit past national errors; that too takes political courage.

But that kind of courage--rare anywhere, anytime, and not now evident in Washington--has been dramatically, unprecedentedly on display in Moscow and the republics over the last five years, above all in the last month. What is needed, after all, is a liberation of global consciousness from the cults of nuclearism and militarism as the people of the former USSR have recently, spectacularly, freed themselves from the cult of communism.

Each of the steps above is meant to encourage emulation and reciprocation, and has good prospects of achieving this eventually. But each one of them, separately, is worth undertaking even though that response is uncertain and might, in particular cases, be long delayed.

The point is not, at all, to give up on the US as a negotiating partner and an actor of utmost importance in the pursuit of nuclear sanity: but no longer to wait on it, to do what makes utmost sense independently, for the security and survival of the republics and of all humanity.

An expanded discussion follows of the initiatives and goals summarized above.

A SELECTION OF INDEPENDENTLY WORTHWHILE INITIATIVES BY THE REPUBLICS--OR CENTRAL BODY--CONTROLLING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

(1) Declare the international goal of eliminating tactical nuclear weapons worldwide--a "zero option" for tactical nuclear weapons--and a universal renunciation of "first use" of nuclear weapons, to be implemented not only in declarations but in inventory, deployment, doctrine and renunciation of tacit or explicit threats.

As initiatives toward this goal:

--dismantle and destroy--not merely, remove to Russia--all tactical weapons from East Europe, and from republics of the former USSR outside Russia, including air-launched weapons. Call for the removal of all such weapons from Western Europe, thus creating in short order a large "nuclear weapons free zone" in the former area of confrontation.

--remove and destroy all weapons from naval surface ships. Call on all other navies to do likewise.

--reiterate the USSR's renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances--drawing attention to the above steps as decisive, concrete actions to implement this policy--and call on the US and other nuclear powers to join in this commitment, and to make comparable concrete moves.

--announce a phased schedule for the destruction of all tactical nuclear warheads and missiles remaining in Russia, calling on the US and other nuclear powers to reciprocate.

--international studies should be instituted on the best method of disposing of the nuclear materials from these dismantled weapons (rather than, as in the INF Treaty, reusing it for weapons). Meanwhile, weapons removed should be tagged, registered and placed in secure monitored storage.

International inspection and monitoring of all these processes and storage should be invited. Destruction could take place in central locations in republics where the weapons are now located, either by initiative of the republics themselves or whatever body retains authority over the weapons.

(2) Reiterate a call for prompt negotiation of a Comprehensive Test Ban, first between the republics and the US, then including all nuclear powers.

As an immediate initiative to this end:

--All republics should announce a permanent halt, or a prolonged moratorium, on nuclear testing throughout the former USSR: if the latter, a minimum of three years subject to extension, to be continued indefinitely if joined by the US.

--Or, independently, the President of the Russian Republic could decree on the same basis an immediate suspension of testing at the Novaya Zemlya site, following the example of Kazakhstan in ending testing at Semipalatinsk. (Either of these moves would simply formalize a commitment to what has amounted to an undeclared moratorium, with only one test, nearly a year ago, in the last two years).

(3) Declare the goal of eliminating MIRVd land-based missiles as soon as possible, and reducing all strategic warheads by the end of the century down to a maximum of 1000 each for the US and former USSR--preferably much less--limiting the function of nuclear weapons solely to the deterrence of nuclear attack.

This would mean explicitly renouncing--ultimately, on both sides--certain futile and destabilizing roles for strategic weapons: including "damage-limiting" by means of "preemption," "hard-target counterforce," "launch on warning," and "decapitation," along with "prompt" counterforce retaliation and, above all, "extended deterrence," which poses the threat of escalation to a disarming first strike in response to non-nuclear or limited nuclear provocation.

Such current functions on both sides call for force characteristics indistinguishable from "first-strike capability," thus causing mutual apprehension, mutual false alarm dangers--especially in crises--continual "force modernization" including endless warhead and missile testing, and a reciprocal arms race, costly and dangerous in itself and ruling out an effective campaign against further proliferation.

These dangerous pressures can be eliminated only by eschewing the objectives above and modifying force posture accordingly. Once that is accepted, other risks can be reduced, along with costs, by reducing the force structure to "minimal deterrent" levels.

By deciding on and declaring these doctrinal changes, authorities controlling strategic nuclear weapons in the territory of the former USSR can free themselves to act--independently of the laborious START negotiations--to improve their national security and to transform the international environment for further negotiations by simply dismantling and destroying weapons that serve only misguided and now-discarded functions such as those

above, inviting international inspection and monitoring of this process.

To postpone these moves until the US proves willing to recognize and redress its own past errors by making comparable moves simultaneously is simply to reaffirm past mutual illusions about necessary and feasible force characteristics and functions and dangerously false notions about the importance of "parity." And it is to accept perhaps irretrievable delay.

Specific initiatives which are timely now include:

--Strategic weapons now in Kazakhstan, the Ukraine and Byelorussia should be dismantled and destroyed, not merely removed from these republics. Destruction could, for example, take place under international inspection within these republics, either at the initiative of the republics themselves or by decision of whatever body retains authority over nuclear weapons.

(With the dismantling and destruction of tactical nuclear weapons as well, these republics can commit themselves to remain "nuclear weapons-free zones," as they have aspired to be).

--Multi-warhead, highly accurate, vulnerable land-based missiles--in particular, the entire SS-18 force, whose deployment was a dangerous, destabilizing strategic error in the beginning from the point of view argued above--should be dismantled and their warheads destroyed, under international inspection, without the delay of further negotiations.

(4) Acknowledge and promulgate recognition of an urgent international interest in the rigor and reliability of control, storage and operational handling of all existing nuclear weapons--including those in process of dismantlement and destruction--and of all fissionable material, which must be demonstrated by acceptance of systematic and intrusive international inspection and monitoring of relevant processes and facilities inside national territories.

--In line with this, Russia and the other republics should not only accept but call for, encourage and support international understanding, inspection and monitoring of existing and improved measures of control, inventory management, secure storage and operational and logistical practices relating to all nuclear weapons and fissionable materials on their own territories.

(5) Demand prolongation and strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty, foregoing any tests or development that arguably violate or erode this constraint.

Non-nuclear Initiatives

(5) Declare the goal of a radical reduction worldwide in the production, deployment, and transfer by sale or otherwise of tanks, long-range aircraft and missiles: thus, the radical reduction of international commerce in armaments.

The context for this, ideally, would be the general adoption of "non-offensive defense" as the basis for national defense postures. This should be implemented by mutually coordinated planning and reciprocated initiatives on the model of the USSR's unilateral reduction of offensive tank forces in East Germany and elsewhere in East Europe, initiated in December, 1988.

--As an initiative toward this end, Russia and the rest of the republics of the former USSR would eliminate--or radically reduce--the production and sale or transfer abroad of such weapons, while radically reducing their internal deployment.

The republics would press a worldwide campaign for elimination or drastic reduction of production and transfer through sale or military aid of such weapons supporting offensive postures, which constitute the bulk of the international arms trade. This would be accompanied by a campaign of educating military staffs throughout the world on the principles and merits of "non-offensive defense."

Thus, by education, diplomatic pressure and example--including, of course, sharp reduction in the overall defense budgets of the republics--the states of the former USSR would aim at the drastic reduction--by more than 75%--of the military budgets of the Third World and those of the NATO powers, along with their own.

(6) Aim at the delegitimation of Covert Action worldwide. Set an example by eliminating the institutional capabilities of the KGB for external covert action, while discussing and negotiating the multilateral elimination of such activities worldwide.

Public discussion of the transformation of the KGB, under new leadership after the failed coup, has mentioned the severing of its "FBI"-like or domestic security functions and of its military forces, thus allegedly rendering it analogous to a "Western-style intelligence agency."

But this would leave it not only with capabilities--to be retained--for the collection and analysis of foreign intelligence, but with a formidable apparatus for external covert action--like the CIA's Directorate of Operations--ranging from clandestine support of paramilitary forces to support of coups, assassinations and terrorism. With the ending of the Cold War, such Directorates are overdue for elimination on both sides.

To legitimate and institutionalize such "deniable" capabilities is inconsistent with aspirations to democracy--whether in the US, the former USSR or elsewhere--and to a peaceful world order. The role of KGB leadership in the recent coup has made this danger vivid; it is an unprecedented opportunity for Russia and the other republics to show leadership in delegitimizing and dismantling such functions and capabilities.

It would serve this purpose--and the more far-reaching purpose of educating the publics of other states to undertake similar challenge, examination and dismantling--to open the files of the KGB on past covert political and paramilitary action, not only by the USSR but by other nations: i.e., to publish "The KGB Papers."

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To legitimate and institutionalize such "deniable" capabilities is inconsistent with aspirations to democracy--whether in the US, the former USSR or elsewhere--and to a peaceful world order. The role of KGB leadership in the recent coup has made this danger vivid; it is an unprecedented opportunity for Russia and the other republics to show leadership in delegitimizing and dismantling such functions and capabilities.

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Non-nuclear Initiatives

(5) Declare the goal of a radical reduction worldwide in the production, deployment, and transfer by sale or otherwise of tanks, long-range aircraft and missiles: thus, the radical reduction of international commerce in armaments.

The context for this, ideally, would be the general adoption of "non-offensive defense" as the basis for national defense postures. This should be implemented by mutually coordinated planning and reciprocated initiatives on the model of the USSR's unilateral reduction of offensive tank forces in East Germany and elsewhere in East Europe, initiated in December, 1988.

--As an initiative toward this end, Russia and the rest of the republics of the former USSR would eliminate--or radically reduce--the production and sale or transfer abroad of such weapons, while radically reducing their internal deployment.

The republics would press a worldwide campaign for elimination or drastic reduction of production and transfer through sale or military aid of such weapons supporting offensive postures, which constitute the bulk of the international arms trade. This would be accompanied by a campaign of educating military staffs throughout the world on the principles and merits of "non-offensive defense."

Thus, by education, diplomatic pressure and example--including, of course, sharp reduction in the overall defense budgets of the republics--the states of the former USSR would aim at the drastic reduction--by more than 75%--of the military budgets of the Third World and those of the NATO powers, along with their own.

(6) Aim at the delegitimation of Covert Action worldwide. Set an example by eliminating the institutional capabilities of the KGB for external covert action, while discussing and negotiating the multilateral elimination of such activities worldwide.

Public discussion of the transformation of the KGB, under new leadership after the failed coup, has mentioned the severing of its "FBI"-like or domestic security functions and of its military forces, thus allegedly rendering it analogous to a "Western-style intelligence agency."

But this would leave it not only with capabilities--to be retained--for the collection and analysis of foreign intelligence, but with a formidable apparatus for external covert action--like the CIA's Directorate of Operations--ranging from clandestine support of paramilitary forces to support of coups, assassinations and terrorism. With the ending of the Cold War, such Directorates are overdue for elimination on both sides.